

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
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Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Nine Tribal Nations

EPA Issues Order to Implement Surface Fire Prevention Measures at West Lake Landfill and Finalizes Enforceable Schedule for Final Evaluation of Remedial Alternatives

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Environmental News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Lenexa, Kan., Dec. 10, 2015) – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has issued a Unilateral Administrative Order (UAO) to Bridgeton Landfill, LLC; Rock Road Industries, Inc.; and Cotter Corporation to develop and implement surface fire prevention measures at the West Lake Landfill Superfund Site in Bridgeton, Mo. The order follows an Oct. 24 grass fire at the landfill.

Within 21 days of the effective date of the order, the parties must submit a surface fire prevention work plan to EPA that includes a plan and schedule for:

- Placement of non-combustible material as soon as possible over areas where radiologically impacted material (RIM) is currently known to be at or near the surface;
- Targeted clearing of trees and brush with no cuttings extending below the soil surface in places where RIM is known to be located at or near the surface in Operable Unit-1 (OU-1), and the placement of non-combustible material over the cleared areas;
- Testing to confirm that RIM located at or near the surface has been covered;
- Air monitoring to ensure protection of on-site workers and the surrounding community during clearing of vegetation and placement of cover materials;
- Maintenance of cover materials until EPA selects and implements a final remedy at the site.

“This EPA order requires swift action by the parties to ensure that the risks of a surface fire, and the effects of any potential surface fire, are greatly reduced,” said EPA Region 7 Administrator Mark Hague. “EPA will continue to use its authority at the site to protect surrounding communities from any potential threats posed by the West Lake Landfill. Putting a stable cover over the RIM located at the surface is not the final remedy. It is a common-sense engineering control to address the challenge of surface fires until a final remedy is selected.”

In addition to requiring surface fire prevention measures, the order requires the parties to submit within 14 days a framework for an Incident Management Plan (IMP) at OU-1. Among other requirements, the IMP will:

- Describe a system to allow for 24-hour site observation;
- Define responses for various emergency scenarios at OU-1, to include surface fires;
- Include a staffing plan to ensure IMP implementation 24 hours a day, seven days a week;
- Identify when and how personnel will notify local emergency responders and regulatory authorities, to include EPA, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services in the event of any emergency scenario identified by the IMP;
- Description of types of fire suppression measures;
- Description of response measures to be taken after a surface fire event.

EPA has also reached an agreement with the parties on an enforceable schedule for evaluating remedial alternatives. This schedule requires specific actions throughout the next year so that EPA can propose a final remedy to the public by the end of 2016.

A new report also released today concludes that soil samples taken at the location of the fire were consistent with naturally occurring background radiation readings.

The above referenced agreement, report, and the signed UAO are available on EPA Region 7's West Lake Landfill website: http://www.epa.gov/region7/cleanup/west_lake_landfill/

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Learn more about EPA's work at the West Lake Landfill:
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